

Zak Comment Two Received 10/6/2006

Dear Mr. Howatt,

I write to you as a member of Citizens for Clean Power, pleading that you consider the hidden costs of coal in the bidding process. Coal's costs are passed on to the consumer and the taxpayer in a number of ways.

There are the numerous health problems which must be considered; there are the environmental problems of polluting the Indian River Bay, one of the 10 most polluted bays in the US; there is the unknown and hidden cost of passing the carbon (CO₂) clean-up onto the consumer. Please consider the enormous loop hole which gives the coal producers an unfair advantage in the bidding process. THE COAL COMPANY IS BEING ABLE TO PASS THE COST OF PRODUCTION UNTO THE CONSUMER. This unknown cost could be of potentially profound proportions. This is unfair as the consumer has no choice in this matter. The Public Service Commission should carefully consider all the hidden costs of coal in the bidding process.

The hidden cost of passing the carbon clean-up onto the consumer must be factored into the cost of the coal bidding process.

First of all, carbon sequestration cannot be done at the Indian River site. Thus, a means of transporting CO₂ to a location where it can be sequestered underground can be costly; additionally, such a site would need to be built with technology that has yet to be developed. There are incredible unknown and unfair costs to the consumer, and only the PSC can protect against this.

While wind power may cost more initially, it has the long-term benefit of being a clean, renewable, and ultimately more cost effective. Once the start-up costs are paid for, the state can enjoy an almost free source of power, with wind revenues from the sale of excess energy to the Mid-Atlantic region being able to supply DE coffers in the foreseeable future. Also, unlike coal, a wind farm does not require DE citizens to buy a pig in a poke. Wind also has the great advantage of improving the health care costs borne by all in the state.

Please be sure to consider the devastating health costs from coal plants, especially these old ones like Indian River and Edge Moor. While DNREC has developed regulations for cleaning up these plants, the coal lobbyists are trying both to water down and also to delay implementation. This is a tactic that has been successful in the past as Connectiv promised during the 1990's to close down the old facility at Indian River in 2001 if only they didn't have to clean it up. Realistically, we know that corporate power in DE holds more sway than citizen power regarding public health issues. That is why allowing wind to replace coal serves the citizens' best interest.

The state of health in Delaware is one the worst in the country. The American Lung Association gave all 3 Delaware counties a grade of "F" for air quality in 2004-2005, Infant mortality rate for DE in the most recent statistic I could find ranks DE 6th worst in the country. A Harvard Health study in 2000 found that residents living within a 30 mile radius of the old coal plants is at a 5 times greater risk of disease and premature death. Not 2 times: 5 times. The new DNREC regulations do not address fine particle pollution; however, the EPA has concluded that fine particle pollution (PM_{2.5}) from coal plants shortens the lives of Delawareans each year, causes 13,000 lost work days, 87 hospitalizations, and 2256 asthma attacks every year, 99 of which are so severe that they require emergency room visits. Mercury emissions from stacks are a primary cause of neurological damage in children; infants living near stacks have a 26% increase in Infant Death Syndrome and a 40% increased risk of respiratory death.

Autism rates are significantly higher nationwide than 20 years ago. Moreover, a retired EPA scientist looking at special ed classes noticed an alarming increase in the number of students in special ed classes in districts downwind of the Indian River Plant. Think of the untold heartache of parents with children with autism. Calculate the cost to taxpayers for educating autistic children, who require the most attention in our school systems, with a number of specialists assigned. In fact, the cost for one year of educating a child with autism is \$80,000 versus \$9000 for a child in a standard classroom. More importantly, these children face a life-long uphill battle. Please consider the hidden cost of coal in the bidding process. Any amount of air-borne or water-borne mercury is a danger to the citizens of Delaware.

Citizens for Clean Power is an organization that represents over several thousand Sussex Countians, among them members in the following other groups including the Sierra Club, the Audubon Society, the American Lung Association, the Rehoboth Beach AARP, the Clean Air Council, the 14th District Democrats.. You have the power to give Delaware the cleanest air possible. So please try to calculate the hidden costs of coal.

Sincerely, Kit Zak
Citizens for Clean Power